



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3605  
September 23, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

The American people deserve a transparent accounting of how their government utilizes their tax dollars. Since 2001, the U.S. government provided roughly \$83 billion in military aid to the Afghan National Security Forces. This aid was distributed primarily in the form of physical equipment and personnel training.<sup>1</sup>

Until recently, the American people had access to detailed breakdowns of how equipment and aid was disbursed. For example, an August 2017 Government Accountability Office report noted that, between 2003 and 2016, the U.S. outfitted the Afghan military with 75,898 vehicles and 208 aircraft.<sup>2</sup> Access to this information provided transparency for the American people to see how the government was spending taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan.

It is troubling, therefore, that State Department officials have acknowledged that your administration has ordered federal agencies to remove such reports from public view.<sup>3</sup> Even more so when your own National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan, said “We don’t have a complete picture, obviously, of where every article of defense materials has gone, but certainly a fair amount of it has fallen into the hands of the Taliban.”<sup>4</sup> Your administration’s stated reasoning for the removal of the reports that their’ continued availability endangers the safety of U.S. Afghan partners still in the country needs further justification. Accordingly, we would like clarification on the following points:

1. How does the publication of quantified military equipment and its costs—which does not mention specific information to identify personnel—endanger US Afghan partners?
2. Were the removals of these taxpayer funded reports intended to be permanent? If not, when will access be restored?

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<sup>1</sup> SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION (SIGAR), QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS 166 (July 30, 2021), *available at* <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2021-07-30qr-appendices.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, AFGHANISTAN SECURITY: U.S.-FUNDED EQUIPMENT FOR THE AFGHAN NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES 6 (Aug. 10, 2017), *available at* [https://www.openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/GAO\\_Report\\_-\\_Afghanistan\\_Equipment1.pdf](https://www.openthebooks.com/assets/1/6/GAO_Report_-_Afghanistan_Equipment1.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Adam Andrzejewski, *Biden Administration Erased Afghan Weapons Reports from Federal Websites*, FORBES (Aug. 31, 2021), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamandrzejewski/2021/08/31/biden-administration-erased-afghan-weapons-reports-from-federal-websites/>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

3. Will your administration commit to refrain from further restricting the public's access to information related to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan?

Over the course of the past 20 years, the American people invested approximately \$2 trillion worth of their taxes in the U.S. mission.<sup>5</sup> It is highly concerning that your administration ordered audits of that investment to be removed from the public record at a time when criticism abounds about the steps your administration took which failed to secure military equipment prior to the final withdrawal.

In the interest of providing the transparency our nation deserves and expects, we request that you answer the questions above. Additionally, please submit to Congress a list of each report previously published online that was made inaccessible. For each report, without disclosing information that may endanger US allies in Afghanistan, provide a more detailed justification for why it was made inaccessible.

This information is crucial to facilitate a sober-minded, fact-based analysis of the war in Afghanistan and its rapid conclusion.

Sincerely,



Ted Budd  
Member of Congress



Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress



Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Mike Bost  
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack  
Member of Congress



Ben Cline  
Member of Congress

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<sup>5</sup> Brown University Watson Institute International & Public Affairs, *Costs of War: U.S. Costs to Date for the War in Afghanistan, in \$ Billions FY2001–2022* (August 2021), available at <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures/2021/human-and-budgetary-costs-date-us-war-afghanistan-2001-2022>.



Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



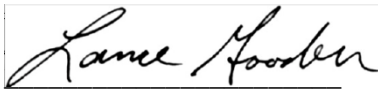
Warren Davidson  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Bob Good  
Member of Congress



Lance Gooden  
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Jody Hice  
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly  
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Young Kim  
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Tracey Mann  
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Bill Posey  
Member of Congress

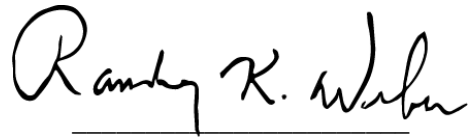


Michelle Steel  
Member of Congress



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W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress



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Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress